TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITY TO IMPROVE A HIGH-POVERTY URBAN SCHOOL

A Record of Study

by

DOUGLAS RAY RICE

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Chair of Committee,	Jean Madsen
Committee Members,	Beverly Irby
	Carl Fahrenwald
	Ben Welch
Head of Department,	Mario Torres

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to gain insight into teacher perceptions of their ability to improve a high poverty urban school. The school selected for this study came from a purposive sampling of urban schools that had exited from improvement required status and had then demonstrated gains in student academic performance in subsequent years. Four teachers and two administrators were recruited to take part in this study. Two teachers from English Language Arts and two teachers from math participated. These two disciplines were selected due to the reliance on student performance in these two areas on state and federal accountability ratings. Two administrators who had experience during the time the school was in improvement required status and had participated in seeing the school exit IR and make gains in student academic performance also participated.

All participants participated in 45-minute, semi-structured interview. Additionally, the teachers agreed to a 45-minute classroom observation where instructional practices and questioning strategies were recorded according to established protocols. Additional data sources included state and campus performance reports, the school's campus improvement plan, and anecdotal data from the researcher's reflexive journal kept during the study. Data from the interview were reviewed to find themes that were consistent with prior research on collective efficacy and trust.

The data show that teachers' perceptions of collective efficacy and trust were positive. Four subthemes of collective efficacy; mastery experience, vicarious

experience, social persuasion, and affective state emerged from the analysis. Subthemes of trust that emerged were supportive actions by the administrators and relational trust. The data from the classroom observations indicated that the teachers who participated in this study demonstrated higher level instructional practices and used questioning strategies that were at a level above what prior research on teachers with economically disadvantaged students had shown.

DEDICATION

I could not have completed this journey without the support of my family. First, to my wife Jana, your encouragement, prodding, and support throughout this process made it possible for me to accomplish this study. To my children, Carly, Cristen and Evan. I took much of what happened to you as students to heart and sought solutions to problems that you brought to my attention. I could not have completed this long journey without thinking of you. To all of the wonderful teachers and administrators that participated in this study, you have renewed my beliefs that we can truly reach all students and touch he future. To all of the staff members at Texas A&M, you have changed my life and for that I am forever grateful. Finally, to my mom and dad. Though you have been gone for some time now, you wanted be to be better than I ever thought possible. You always believed in me and my possibilities, I hope that this study will allow others to see that you can reach great heights if you believe you can.

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NOMENCLATURE

AEIS – Academic Excellence Indicator System

CIP – Campus Improvement Plan or Campus Intervention Plan

IR – Improvement Required

PEIMS – Public Education Information Management System

PLC – Professional Learning Community

TEA – Texas Education Agency

TEKS – Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

TAKS – Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

TAPR – Texas Academic Performance Report

SDMC – Shared Decision-Making Committee

STAAR – State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Across the United States, schools face increasing demands from the standards movement. Prior to the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, educators already faced federal and local pressure to increase rigor. The impetus for these changes was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed in 1965, which had a primary goal to provide federal support for disadvantaged children as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty (Thomas & Brady, 2005). Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines state that students are identified as economically disadvantaged if they are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program (TEA, 2012).

Blank (2011) noted that the core purpose of federal education policy has been to improve public education for economically disadvantaged students. Based on household income, free or reduced-cost lunch status is determined by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and while qualifying incomes may change from year to year, the educational needs for these students do not. TEA data demonstrate that economically disadvantaged students and students of color underperform on state assessments when compared to White and more affluent peers.

Schools that serve large numbers of ELLs, special education students, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds face a higher risk of identification as schools In Need of Improvement (Abedi, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Fusarelli, 2004). Dweck (2008) stated that normal "stereotypes tell teachers which groups of

students are bright and which are not" (p. 197). This idea is confirmed by research by Auwarter and Aruguette (2008), who found that teachers frequently judge economically disadvantaged students as less than capable. If stereotypes of underserved students are common in schools, then the lower performance of students in high-poverty schools could be a result of those lowered expectations.

Research by Solomon, Battistich, and Horn (1996) supported the idea that teachers' beliefs and teaching practices differ in areas where there is a higher concentration of students who are economically disadvantaged. They found that economically disadvantaged students receive more instruction in language arts from basal readers, do less silent reading, and less creative writing. In math, these students received less instruction on analytical concepts and get less-frequent use of cooperative learning in both language arts and math. Dweck (2008) further states that "simply raising standards in our schools, without giving students the means for reaching them, is a recipe for disaster" (p.194).

Based on the results of these studies, it is clear that the students most in need of high-quality instruction receive instruction at the lowest levels of rigor. As the expectations for student performance on state mandated assessments rise, students of color, special education students, and those who are economically disadvantaged face the possibility of falling further behind their more-affluent peers. The intent of this study was to investigate the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of improving a high-poverty school.

Problem Statement

In the secondary grades, students who are economically disadvantaged are almost twice as likely to be retained as their counterparts who are not eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (TEA, 2014). A review of student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) indicated that economically disadvantaged students score lower on state-mandated assessments than their more-advantaged peers. (TEA, 2012 and TEA, 2015). These data support investigating a high-poverty, urban school that has made improvements in academic performance. Using prior research done on collective efficacy and trust, this study sought to gain insight into this phenomenon using a qualitative case study approach.

Rationale

Students of color, special education students, and those who are economically disadvantaged have been the focus of state and federal educational reforms since 1965. However, data provided by TEA indicates that these students are still behind their more-affluent peers in terms of academic performance. While policymakers have been searching for solutions to change the academic performance of disadvantaged students by legislative means, researchers have been investigating solutions to this problem using various methods of study as well. School leaders and educators have tried to fix this problem by using practical means. However, the most effective way to provide lasting change is to ensure that the teachers have the agency to impact learning in the classroom. Research by Goddard, LoGerfo, and Hoy (2004) indicated that increasing the collective

efficacy of the teachers is a means to create the agency that teachers need to close the academic gaps for economically disadvantaged students (p. 420). As schools have become more collaborative in their nature, research on how the interactions between the staff and administrators has shown that trust is an additional factor on the ways that educators improve their performance. If practitioners are able improve their beliefs about their collective capabilities to reach all students and also improve the levels of trust between the stakeholders of the school, then the students they serve would benefit by improved instruction. Using collective efficacy and trust as the theoretical frames, this study will add to the research literature by giving voice to these teachers and adding a richness and depth to the field that has primarily used quantitative methods to study collective efficacy and trust in schools.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers and administrators about improving a high-poverty, urban school. Using a qualitative case study approach, the goal was to gain insight into the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of improving a high-poverty school. The school selected for this study came from a purposive sample of urban schools that serve a population of greater than 80% economically disadvantaged students, that removed themselves from improvement-required status under the state accountability system, and that had shown positive increases in student performance after exiting Improvement Required (IR) status. Data sources included semi-structured interviews of four teachers and two administrators, classroom observations of the teachers, state- and campus-level reports on the state

assessments in reading and math, the campus improvement plan, and anecdotal observations.

Significance

Prior research conducted on collective efficacy has been primarily quantitative (e.g., Goddard, Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, Tschannen-Moran & Barr, Goodard and Skrla; et al.). Furthermore, research on trust (e.g., Tschannen-Moran & Barr (1998); Adams & Forsyth (2009); Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky (2009); et al.) was also quantitative. While these studies have been effective in demonstrating the importance of the roles of collective efficacy and trust on student achievement, they are lacking in providing the voice of the practitioners who have been studied. This study will be add to the field by utilizing a qualitative, case study approach to give practitioners a voice and to add depth to the field's understanding of the role of collective efficacy and trust beliefs in a high-poverty, urban school.

Summary

Efforts to reform education have been ongoing at the state and federal level for the past several years. In recent years, policy makers have provided answers for marginalized groups of students by mandating increased standards and sanctions for schools that do not meet those standards. The students that are most likely to underperform on state-mandated assessments are students of color and those who are economically disadvantaged, but research has shown (Abedi, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2007; and Fusarelli, 2004) that schools that serve these students are more likely to be in Improvement Required status. In order to close the academic gaps that appear in state-

level data, an approach that provides lasting impact on the possibility of academic success by marginalized students is worthy of investigation. This study used a qualitative case study approach to investigate the perceptions that teachers and administrators have regarding improvement at a high-poverty, urban school. In order to analyze the data that emerged from this study, it was necessary to find constructs that have been shown by prior research to be effective. The two constructs that prior research and have shown to be effective means to address lowered student academic performance by marginalized students are collective efficacy and trust. By providing a voice for these practitioners, we can work to provide solutions to lowered expectation for marginalized students and assist practitioners in the important work of reaching all students.

The next chapter will provide a review of literature on collective efficacy and trust.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rationale

Students who are in underserved populations have become a focus of policymakers over the past several years. Increased pressure has been applied on school personnel through a series of legislative move that attempted to focus on the instructional efforts that impact these student groups. As the standards movement and increased accountability have continued to evolve, it has become clear certain student groups are continuing to underperform in relation to their more affluent peers. Tables 1 and 2 indicate TEA data that show that economically disadvantaged students and students of color perform at levels that are lower than their more-advantaged peers on the reading and math STAAR assessments in the state of Texas.

Table 1 Statewide Student Performance on the STAAR Reading Test, 2015-2019

Year	State	AA	H	Wh	AI	Asian	PI	2/M	Sped	Eco-Dis	ELL
2015	77%	68%	72%	88%	77%.	92%	80%	85%	43%	70%	55%
2016	73%	63%.	68%	84%	71%	91%	75%	82%	35%	65%	52%
2017	72%	61%	67%	83%	71%	90%	73%	81%	35%	64%	51%
2018	74%	64%	69%	84%	72%	91%	75%	82%	39%	66%	64%

Note: percentages indicate performance at the minimum passing standard

Tea.texas.gov. (2018). *Texas Academic Performance Reports.* [online] Available at: https://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/index.html [Accessed 1 Nov. 2018]

Table 2 Statewide Student Performance on the STAAR Reading Test, 2015-2019

Year	State	AA	H	Wh	AI	Asian	PI	2/M	Sped	Eco-Dis	ELL
2015	77%	68%	72%	88%	77%	92%	80%	85%	43%	70%	55%
2016	73%	63%	68%	84%	71%	91%	75%	82%	35%	65%	52%
2017	72%	61%	67%	83%	71%	90%	73%	81%	35%	64%	51%
2018	74%	64%	69%	84%	72%	91%	75%	82%	39%	66%	64%

Note: percentages indicate performance at the minimum passing standard

Tea.texas.gov. (2018). *Texas Academic Performance Reports.* [online] Available at: https://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/index.html [Accessed 1 Nov. 2018]

The data show that on the STAAR Reading assessment, the passing rate for White students is at a minimum 10 percentage points higher than African American, Hispanic, and American Indian students. Also, these same students pass the assessment at levels much higher than Economically Disadvantaged and English Language Learners. On the state math assessments, student achievement is similarly disproportionate. This disparity in student performance suggests a need for research at successful schools in high-poverty settings. As educators, we should believe that all students have the capacity to learn, therefore it is important to identify the underlying factors that contribute to improved academic outcomes for the most vulnerable student.

Schools with significant numbers of low socio-economic students have been found to have a higher risk of being identified as In Need of Improvement according to federal standards (Abedi, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2007; and Fusarelli, 2004). Teacher attitudes and relationships with students from low-income backgrounds serve as factors

in the performance of these students who are most in need of assistance. Dweck (2008) stated that the normal stereotypes about different groups tell teachers which groups of students are bright and which are not. These ideas are confirmed by research done by Auwarter and Aruguette (2008), who found that teachers frequently judge economically disadvantaged students as less than capable. However, these students are deserving of the same level of educational effort as their more affluent peers.

Further research by Solomon, Battistich, and Horn (1996) supports the idea that teachers' beliefs and teaching practices differ in areas where there is a higher concentration of students who are economically disadvantaged. They found that economically disadvantaged students receive more instruction in language arts from basal readers, do less silent reading, and less creative writing. In math, these students received less instruction on analytical concepts and receive less-frequent use of cooperative learning in both language arts and math. If these factors are not addressed, then the chances for economically disadvantaged students to graduate from high school are diminished (Becker, & Luthar, 2002). Dweck (2008) further states that, "simply raising standards in our schools, without giving students the means for reaching them, is a recipe for disaster." She also asserts that "great teachers set high standards for all students, not just the ones who are already achieving" (p. 196). In a study by McDermott and Rothenberg (2000) on the characteristics of effective teacher in high-poverty schools, high standards for children's learning was found to be significant (p.13). Additionally, establishing trusting and respectful relationships was found to be important, as well (p.15). Since teachers and administrators in high-poverty schools are

more likely to face pressures of negative attention from state and federal accountability agencies, then research should indicate that attributes that effective teachers in these settings have that separate them from those who are not successful in similar settings.

If we believe that all students are capable of higher achievement, then it should follow that teachers have the capacity to impact the learning of all students. Researchers have found that teacher collective efficacy is positively related to increased student academic performance (e.g., Goddard; Goddard & Skrla; Goddard, Hoy& Woolfolk-Hoy; Tschannen-Moran & Barr; et al.). Teachers committed to improving academic performance in high-poverty schools may possess positive perceptions of collective efficacy and trust that this study sought to discover. Bandura (1993) stated that "staffs who firmly believe that, by their determined efforts, students are motivatable and teachable whatever their background, schools populated with minority students of low socio-economic status achieve at the highest percentile ranks based on national norms of language and mathematical competencies" (p. 143). Teachers successful in reaching the groups of students most often found in high-poverty schools should have the ability to persevere in the face of difficulties that their colleagues in more-affluent schools do not encounter.

Additional studies have found that schools with elevated trust also have collective efficacy (e.g., Tschannen-Moran; Hoy & Woolfolk; Goddard; et al.). Additionally, Goddard et al. (2009) indicated that "in schools characterized by high levels of trust, teachers tend to feel greater responsibility and are more likely to invest themselves in the operations of the school" (p. 298). Collective efficacy and trust appear

to work in concert, providing teachers with the agency necessary to positively reach underserved students. Using these two theories as the frame, this study sought to determine whether teachers at a high-poverty, urban school had positive perceptions of collective efficacy and trust.

The researcher has a personal connection to economically disadvantaged students and the positive impact of efficacious teachers. As a K-12 student, the researcher would have been identified as economically disadvantaged. The positive beliefs of the teachers who impacted my learning during that time started me on an academic path that few of them could have seen at the time.

Collective Efficacy Theory

Research has indicated that behaviors of instructional staff directly impact the academic success of students (Goddard & Skrla, 2006, p. 220). Teacher collective efficacy has been shown to have positive impact on student academic performance. Studies by Goddard, 2001; Goddard, LoGerfo, & Hoy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004; Goddard, Skrla, & Salloum, 2017; and others reveal that collective efficacy is positively related to student academic performance. Samson, Morenoff, & Earls (1999) noted that collective efficacy also is important to the functioning of a group since it helps explain how the capacity for action is leveraged for results. Goddard (2001) found that collective efficacy was significantly and positively related to between-school differences in student achievement, even when school means were adjusted for prior achievement and demographic characteristics (p. 474). Additionally, positive perceptions of collective efficacy have a mediating effect for students who are economically disadvantaged.

Utilizing this frame, this study sought to gain understanding of teachers' perceptions of collective efficacy in a successful, high-poverty, urban school.

Albert Bandura stated that a strong sense of efficacy is necessary "to remain task oriented in the face of situational demands and failures having social repercussions" (1993, p. 120). Since federal and state accountability systems impose sanctions on schools and districts that chronically underperform, teachers who work primarily with economically disadvantaged students must remain focused on the task of reaching this underserved population. However, not all schools that fall within this subset do poorly. In fact, a school that is purposive in its approach to educating economically disadvantaged students should show a high degree of agency and their efforts and would be worthy of study (Goddard, Hoy, Wolfolk-Hoy, 2000).

Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2000), define human agency as the collective ways that people exercise some level of control over their own lives (p. 481). While some educators may see themselves as a sort of independent contractor working in isolation within their classroom (Lortie, 1975), effective teachers work collaboratively to develop shared goals and approaches that provide students with a better quality of instruction. Goddard, et al. also noted that "we must recognize that it is through individuals that organizations act" (p. 484). While individual teachers can have a positive impact in their classrooms, through the combined efforts of an entire staff, schools can have a more lasting impact on their students. The rise of shared decision making and professional learning communities have assisted schools to develop this shared view of purpose. Goddard, LoGerfo, and Hoy (2004) noted that a school's

organizational agency is seen in the choices made based on perceptions about the collective ability of teachers and administrators to achieve goals they have collaboratively set (p. 405). If a school is staffed by teachers and administrators who have the kind of agency indicated in the research and are successful in reaching underserved students, these teachers should have positive perceptions of collective efficacy.

Bandura's theory suggests that staff members who successfully educate economically disadvantaged students should have a higher level of perceived, collective efficacy (2000, p. 75). He posits that expectations can determine how much effort the group would be willing to exert and how long they would sustain this effort in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller (2015) found that teacher collaboration focused on instructional improvement was a strong predictor of collective efficacy (p. 525). These collective efforts to significantly improve instruction support the research by Bandura (1997), which suggested that empowerment helps in the development of collective efficacy. Dweck (2008) states that "great teachers set high standards for all students, not just high achievers" (p. 195). If a school has faced state sanctions under the designation "Improvement Required," and consequently met the requirements to have that designation removed, identification of the factors that assisted in removing those sanctions should be of importance to policy makers and practitioners alike.

Chronically underperforming schools do not have the staying power to meet the instructional needs of the students. Schools that have successfully exited "Needing

Improvement" status have the agency that Bandura and others have outlined. These effective schools have adopted a continual improvement model that has been adapted to the instructional needs of the student population. Bandura (1977, p. 131) notes four ways in which strong efficacy beliefs will have an impact on the degree of efficacy:

1. Determination of goals that people set for themselves.
2. How much effort will be expended.
3. How long they will persevere in the face of difficulties.
4. Resilience to failure.

Each factor should present itself in a successful, high-poverty school. While all schools set goals as mandated by the state and federal agencies, not all will persevere and attain these goals. Hoy and Wolfolk (1993) note that schools need to successfully cope with their environments as they move toward their goals (p. 358). Administrators and teachers who are working with a growth mindset frequently assess their efforts and adjust them accordingly. While all high-poverty schools are required to complete a Campus Improvement Plan to receive federal Title 1 funds, successful schools will continually adapt their plan to the changing needs of their students, staff, and community. The work to advance and adapt the school's efforts to reach all students is indicative of agency to purposively work to improve the educational goals of the campus (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000). A staff that has a belief in their own abilities will succeed through ingenuity and perseverance even if the environment has limited opportunities or many constraints (Bandura,1977, p. 125). The ability to persevere in the face of changing demands from the state accountability system or from changes brought

on by district administrative actions mean that a successful staff is resilient and is able to increase the level of innovative teaching and increased student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004, p. 4).

Bandura (1986) notes that staff persistence and a willingness to stay together is evidenced with higher efficacy. The input that teachers have due to the increased utilization of Professional Learning Communities is important from the frame of collective efficacy because research shows that teacher collaboration provides a pathway to efficacy beliefs by allowing teachers to have input into the instructional practices that are expected to be used every day. Goddard, LoGerfo, and Hoy (2004) found that collective efficacy is reflected in a school's culture by the purposeful choices that are made in the light of the perceptions of the staff's abilities to reach the goals that are set (p. 405). Ingersoll (2001) found that teacher participation in decision making, administrative support, and school climate were related to teacher turnover (p. 518-519). Goddard, et al., cite that shared interactions serve as building blocks for collective efficacy (p. 504). If these shared interactions are purposive and meaningful, then research on a successful school should indicate a positive impact on student academic performance by showing a commitment to shared decision making on the instructional design of the school. Building on this idea of collaboration as a means to improve a school, we now turn to the impact of trust.

Trust Theory

A second theory that supports this study is trust. Dewitt (2019) noted that collective efficacy does not just happen. He said, " it requires a great deal of trust, which must be built over time, and an intentional effort by educators to buck the status quo" (pp. 31-31). Tschannen-Moran defines trust in two ways. First, she posits that, "trust is one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent and competent" (2004, p. 19). The next definition states, "trust involves placing something one cares about in the care or control of another, with some level of assurance confidence" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 1998, p. 337). Louis (2007) defined trust as, "confidence in or reliance on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principle, of another person or group"(p. 2). Hoy, and Woolfolk (1993) posit that a healthy school is one in which harmonious relationships exist among students, teachers, and administrators as it moves toward accomplishing its mission (p. 356). Tschannen-Moran (2004) continues with this idea when she noted that a high level of trust exists in schools where a high sense of collective efficacy is evident as well (p. 146). Adams and Forsyth (2009) say that "trust enhances school performance by its contribution to cognitive norms that support student achievement" (p 7).

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) note that trust allows people "to place something that they care about in the care or control of another person or group" (p. 337). A staff of educators should view the well-being and academic achievement of the students as their main focus of attention. An effective staff would develop a shared commitment to ensure they provide the best educational processes to aid their students.

Without a level of trust in each other, a school will at best only be inhabited by pockets of disjointed efforts where there is limited hope of effectiveness. However, a school that shows higher trust can be a place where teachers are connected to a greater feeling of responsibility and thus more likely to be invested in the operations of the school (Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2009, p. 298).

Louis (2007) posited that there are two types of trust that occur in society, institutional trust and relational trust. Institutional trust is defined as "the expectation of appropriate behavior in organized settings based on the norms of that institution" (p. 3). Relational trust exists as "the inevitable result of repeated interactions with others" (p.3). Both of these types of trust should appear in a successful high-poverty, urban school. Teachers should have trust with each other and there should also be a level of trust that exists between the teachers and administrators. This study sought to get insight to the perceptions of both types of trust in a successful high-poverty school.

Interpersonal interactions occur in all schools, and the relationships between teachers and between the staff and administration are important parts of the equation when studying these organizations. While all schools face the same levels of expectation from the state accountability system, a school that serves a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students is more likely to face accountability sanctions (Abedi, 2004, Darling-Hammond, 2007, and Fusarelli, 2004). If trust is to be seen as an important factor for success, then we must determine if there are variables to this construct that could be identified through research.

A staff may believe that there is a higher level of trust toward leadership as a result of organizational performance (Bryck &Schneider, 2002; Dirks, 2000). Price (2015) found a strong influence between principal-teacher relationships on the attitudes of the principal and teachers (p. 68). This research is related to the concept of relational trust between the principal and teachers. As was previously stated, Goddard, et al. (2015), found that teacher collaboration focused on instructional improvement was a strong predictor of collective efficacy (p. 525). Teachers must have some sort of belief that their efforts are valued in some way. Tschannen-Moran & Barr (1998) note that collegial and engaged behaviors help create trust (p. 341). Therefore, in this era of shared decision making and professional learning communities, we should see that these processes will lead to an increase in the levels of trust between teachers.

Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky (2009) state that trust is potent and within informal social structures it serves as to mitigate risk, enhance efficiency, and support learning in schools (p. 295). Therefore, if a successful school is shown to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and improve the school's instructional practices, then trust should be evident. Bryck & Schneider (2002) say that broad teacher buy-in is crucial for reform and happens more readily in schools with strong relational trust (p. 43).

The relationship between supervisor and subordinate often defines effective leadership (Price, 2015. P. 44). Kramer & Tyler (1996) say that the trust of these relationships is crucial when an organization undergoes a crisis. If a school has been in Improvement Required status for more than one year, it faces sanctions from the state

(the crisis as defined by Kramer & Tyler). Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000) cite Baier (1986) and Parsons (1960) that trust impacts these relationships because it is "necessary for effective cooperation and communication, the foundation for cohesive and productive relationships in organizations."

Peterson & Smith (2010) state that for schools to be more effective, teachers must trust the campus principal, and vice versa (p.16). In a school with multiple assistant principals, trust should exist in those relationships, as well. They note, however, that the leadership behaviors of the principal are not the daily foci of the teachers (p. 18). But, if the principal or other administrators are not fulfilling their roles, then trust in those individuals would not be evident. If a school is to exit Improvement Required status and become successful, the staff must be able to put at risk what they care about to accomplish things in which they cannot realize by themselves (Goddard, et. al., 2009, p. 294).

Price (2015) notes that by providing support that allows teachers to remain focused on improving instruction, administrators can enhance the cohesion among staff members that forms stronger trusting relationships (p. 46). What then would these supporting behaviors look like and how would they enhance trust between teachers and administrators? Tschannen-Moran & Hoy found that trust allows individuals to focus on the task at hand, and therefore to work and learn more effectively (p. 341). Therefore, an administrator may exhibit create a culture where there are minimal interruptions in the daily classroom processes, thus enhancing the opportunity to teach effectively. Adams & Forsyth note that by looking at the school holistically, administrators can develop and

implement the processes and practices that are important to create supportive conditions such as trust and collective efficacy (2009, p. 22). An effective administrative team sees the whole of the school as important to the overall success of the students, staff, and community.

Summary

Research has shown that collective efficacy is positively associated with teacher behaviors that increase the academic performance of students (Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000; Goddard, LoGerfo & Hoy, 2004; Goddard & Skrla, 2006, and others). In schools that have a high level of trust, the sense of collective efficacy is evident, as well (Tschannen-Moran, 2004. P. 146). As individual constructs, both trust and collective efficacy indicate teachers' and administrators' desire to improve instruction and thereby positively impact student performance.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

In order to gain insight into teachers' perceptions of collective efficacy and trust, a qualitative case study approach was used.

Methods

First, a research design was selected to discover the perceptions of collective efficacy and trust between teachers and administrators at a successful school in a high-poverty, urban setting. These perceptions are bounded within the context of the school, and the researcher had little or no control over variables, making a qualitative case study approach appropriate (Yin, 2009). While quantitative research has shown efficacy's positive impact on student performance, the voice of the participants is missing from much of the research. Qualitative research allows us to utilize multiple sources of evidence when studying a particular phenomenon. Schwandt (2007) adds that case study research is preferred when it is desirable to use multiple sources of evidence. The use of multiple sources and participant interviews added a richness and depth missing from the quantitative research.

Case

Creswell (2002 and 2006) and Plummer (2001) noted that the use of a case study approach allows research to be conducted in depth in the context of time, activity, and place. Plummer states that a case study approach allows researchers to gain insight into the "collective memories and imagined" communities that the participants will have in

their context of time and place. Creswell (2007) stated that case study research is the study of an issue explored through one or more cases in a bounded system. In this study, the issue is the poor academic achievement of students of color and economically disadvantaged students on state assessments. The bounded system that defines this case are high-poverty urban schools that serve a student population of greater that 80% economically disadvantaged students and have removed themselves from Improvement Required status. Yin (2009) posited that the use of a case study design is necessary to understand a real-life phenomenon because the context in which it happens is pertinent to the study (p. 18). Since schools that teach a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students face the same expectations from the state that their students perform as well as students in more affluent schools on state assessments, research on the perceptions of teachers in high-poverty, urban school about collective efficacy and trust will add to the quantitative research that shows the positive impact on academic success of these two concepts.

According to TEA documents, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in Texas public schools rose from 49.2% in 2001 to 60.2% in 2018 (TEA, 2019). While this percentage increase is alarming, the number of students is more concerning. As reported by TEA, in 2003 the number of students who were reported as economically disadvantaged was 2,277,901, already at 50.2% of the total student population (TEA, 2003). By 2019, the number of economically disadvantaged in Texas had risen to 3,283,812 students. This rise in the number of students who may be in

greater need of educational assistance establishes the importance of conducting research in a school successful in meeting the needs of those students.

Students of color and students who are identified as economically disadvantaged have been identified by the data as in need of higher-quality instruction. Legislation has been passed directing funds to schools serving these students at both the state and federal levels. Blank (2011) notes that the core purpose of federal education policy has been to improve public schools that serve economically disadvantaged students. Data from the Texas Education Agency, however, indicate that students who are economically disadvantaged are consistently outperformed their more affluent peers on various state assessments (TEA, 2015). The data shown in Tables 1 and 2 indicate the need for further study of a school that has been successful in reaching these underserved students.

Data Sources

The school used in this study was selected by purposive sampling. Patton (1990) posited that utilizing purposive sampling allows the researcher to collect data that is information rich when investigating a phenomenon in depth. The use of purposive sampling was deemed the most effective means of selecting a school given the requirements of this study. The selection of the participants came from members of the teaching and administrative staff of the school. Teacher selection was made with suggestions from the lead principal. Since she was new to her position, she declined to participate in the study. Another source of data was a single classroom observation of each teacher participant which followed observation protocols approved by IRB to gain

insight into teacher questioning and instructional strategies. Additional data sources were state- and campus-level performance reports and the campus improvement plan.

School Selection

The school selected for this study was a Texas urban school with more than 80% of the student population meeting the criteria as economically disadvantaged. As noted in Tables 1 and 2, students of color and those who are economically disadvantaged underperform on state assessments relative to their more-affluent peers. Schools with large numbers of English Language Learners, Special Education students, and those with large numbers of students from low socio-economic backgrounds have been found to have a higher risk of being identified as In Need of Improvement under federal standards (Abedi, 2004, Darling-Hammond, 2007, and Fusarelli, 2004). Auwarter and Aruguette (2008) found that teachers in those schools frequently judge economically disadvantaged students as less than capable.

The sample of schools for selection included those that had exited from multiple years as "Improvement Required" under the Texas accountability system, and also had seen an increase in student performance for traditionally underserved students over multiple years. This selection process eliminated schools that had exited IR status only to return after a year or two and those that had not shown growth for their underserved populations, as well.

The school selected for this study came from a large, urban district that faces state sanctions due to low performance of some of its campuses, indicating that the selected campus was unusual within its own district. The selected school has been able

to remove itself from the list of IR schools and improved the performance of underserved students over a period of 5 years.

The Hollie Mann School (a pseudonym) is in an area of the city that has several charter and private schools within one mile of the campus that that compete for the students in the attendance zone. The Hollie Mann campus is within sight of the downtown area of this urban city, but an administrative participant noted that many of the students had never been to the downtown area. This school is unique in a large, urban setting in that it encompasses grades 6-12. The high school is a magnet school, but many students come from the neighborhood attendance zone and from other areas with similar demographic make-ups. Additionally, the school houses a "Newcomer Campus" for recent immigrants, further complicating the already challenging situation to perform at the levels expected by state and federal accountability.

The demographics of the Hollie Mann School have remained relatively stable in recent years, as noted in Table 3. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students from 2013 to 2016 had stabilized in 2018. An increase in African American, White, and Asian students makes up for the decrease in Hispanic students. The primary second language of the students is English, while their home language tends to be Spanish, but as in many urban settings, multiple other languages are present. During the time this study was conducted, each of the support staff members in the front office were bilingual.

Table 3 Hollie Mann School Student Demographics, 2013-2018

Year	EcoDis	AA	Hispanic	White	AI	Asian.	PI	2 or More
2018	85.6.	13.2	75.6	4.3	0.3	5.9	0.0	0.7
2017	83.0	12.8	76.1	3.5	0.5	6.6	0.0	0.3
2016	95.6	15.1	74.3	3.5	0.3	6.8	0.0	0.1
2015	91.3	11.4	79.6	3.0	0.1	5.7	0.0	0.2
2014*	91.4	11.9	79.0	3.1	0.1	5.6	0.0	0.3
2013*	86.9	11.1	82.1	2.1	0.1	4.5	0.0	0.1

* Indicates years in Improvement Required Status

Tea.texas.gov. (2018). *Texas Academic Performance Reports.* [online] Available at: https://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/index.html [Accessed 1 Nov. 2018]

The immediate area around the Hollie Mann School has single-family housing on three sides and businesses associated with a typical, urban neighborhood across a main thoroughfare of the city. The building was constructed in 1957, and has had few renovations except for new fencing and an updated, more-secure front entrance. As with many schools facing enrollment growth, there portable classrooms have been added, mainly for high school students and the Newcomer Campus. The school is well maintained for a campus of its age and the staff takes pride in keeping up its appearance.

Participants

Six participants were sought for participation in this study. Since the state and federal accountability systems rely heavily on the use of assessment scores from the reading and math assessments, this study sought to engage two teachers from each of these disciplines as participants. In addition, two administrators were sought to participate to gain a better understanding of the reciprocal beliefs in this high-poverty,

urban school. The campus principal selected the participants. Prospective participants came from a pool of teachers that had been on the campus during the time when the school was in IR status and whose students had shown positive results on the STAAR test. The administrative participants had also been on the campus for several years and helped implement these changes. Teacher participants were selected to balance participation by the middle school and high school sectors. Potential participants were sent an email invitation and given a week to respond. Participants who accepted then completed a consent form that outlined any potential harm that might result during the study, and participants were able to leave the study at any time . Information about the participants is presented in Table 4, while Table 5 indicates the overall staff demographics as submitted to TEA (2018).

Table 4 Participant Information

Name	Demographic	Gender	Assignment	Years of Experience
Kiera	African American	Female	6th Grade ELA	5
Ayla	African American	Female	8th Grade Math	6
Carrie	European American	Female	10th Grade ELA	7
Aminah	Hispanic	Female	HS Calculus	17
Lucas	Hispanic	Male	7th Grade Dean	23
Fabian	Hispanic	Male	8th Grade Dean	10

Table 5 Hollie Mann School Staff Demographics 2018-2019 school year

Number	AA/%	Hispanic/%	White/%	Asian/%	Male	Female
49	20.2/41.1%	17.5/35.5%	8.5/17.3%	3/6.1%.	16.7/33.9%	32.5/66.1%

Experience	Beginning.	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20+ Years
	5/10.2%.	23/46.7%.	5.5/11.1%.	9.5/19.3%.	6.2/12.7%

Tea.texas.gov. (2018). *Texas Academic Performance Reports.* [online] Available at: https://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/index.html [Accessed 1 Nov. 2018]

An initial meeting with the principal was conducted during September of the fall semester of the 2018-2019 school year, and an introductory meeting was scheduled with each participant during this visit. The researcher was able to schedule a meeting with each of the participants during this initial visitation in order to answer questions and schedule the first of two additional interviews.

Data Collection

Multiple sources and methods were used to collect data for this study. The primary method was a semi-structured interview with each participant. A classroom observation of each of the teacher participants was also conducted within two days of the interview of each teaching participant. During the classroom observations, field notes were taken to record the instructional practices that were seen, as well as the questions that each teacher asked the students. This data was utilized to determine if participants' actions varied from the findings by Solomon, Battistich, and Horn (1996) about teacher behaviors. Among the other sources used for data collection were state-level reports from the Texas Education Agency, the school district's resources, and the school's

Campus Improvement Plan. The researcher also kept a reflexive journal to record the impressions and perceptions during data collection.

Interview Protocols

The researcher conducted semi-structured interview so that participants could share their views of collective efficacy and trust. Semi-structured interview protocols gave the researcher and participants the opportunity to engage in a conversational dialogue that involves the exchange of narratives (McMahan & Rogers 1994). Hays and Singh (2012) noted that the use of semi-structured interviews provides "more participant voice" and also "a richer picture of a phenomenon under investigation" (p. 239). Each participant was interviewed for 45-minute minutes in a informal setting using the questions found in Table 6 (for teacher participants) and Table 7 (for administrative participants). Follow-up questions in addition to those listed in Tables 6 and 7 were used get to a deeper understanding of the responses. The researcher developed the questions to determine how the staff learned of the instructional culture of the school, how this was extended to others, how the administration assisted in instructional development, and how the interactions within the campus helped with student performance. These questions were framed to gain insight to the teacher perceptions of improvement in this high-poverty, urban school.

Table 6 Interview Questions – Teacher Participants

1) Please tell me a little bit about your journey to teach here.
2) When you came to teach here, what were the ways in which the staff prepared you to teach the students here?
3) When you came to this school, what were the ways in which the administration prepared you to teach here?
4) What would you say are the best aspects of teaching that you have learned from being a part of the staff here?
5) How do the administrators encourage staff to grow in their instructional practices?
6) Tell me about the structure of the campus improvement team?
    a. How would you describe how they are able to give input into the ways that instruction is delivered to the students?
    b. Do you feel that the teaching staff is united in their approach to teaching the students here? Elaborate
7) Are there ways in which the staff reaches out to each other when they are facing a difficult situation in the classroom?
    a. How does the administration assist in these efforts?
8) Why would you say that this school is more successful than other schools that have similar student populations?
9) In what ways does the administration communicate to the staff?

10) How do the administration and staff work to have a shared vision for this school?
11) How would you rate the level of trust with the teachers?
    a. Please tell me more about why you feel this way?
12) How would you rate the level of trust between the teachers and administration?
    a. Please tell me more about why you feel this way?
13) Would you say that the families trust this school?
    a. Why or Why not?
14) Do you have any additional information about teaching here you would like me to let me know?

Table 7 Interview Questions – Administrative Participants

1) Tell me about your journey to become an administrator at this school?
2) When you came to this school, how were you prepared to lead the staff to meet the demands they face to teach here?
3) Describe the ways in which the teachers interact on a daily basis?
4) What would you say are the best aspects of being and administrator on this campus?
5) What things are being done to encourage professional growth at this school?
6) Tell me about the structure of the campus improvement team?
    a. How are the various stakeholders are able to give input into the campus improvement process?

b. How do you see that the staff is united in their approach to teaching here?

7) What are the ways in which the teachers reach out for assistance when they are facing a difficult situation in the classroom?
    a. How would you say the administration and staff assist tin these efforts?
8) Why would you say that this school is more successful than other school that have a similar student population?
9) In what ways does the administrative teach communicate with the staff?
10) How does the administration and staff work to have a shared vision for this school?
11) How would you rate the level of trust between teacher?
    a. Please tell me why you feel this way?
12) How would you rate the level of trust between teachers and administrators?
    a. Please tell me why you feel this way?
13) Would you say that the families trust this school?
    a. Why or Why not?
14) Do you have any additional information about serving at this school that you would like me to know?

All participants agreed to an audio recording of their interview. After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed by the researcher with no outside assistance.

The recordings and the transcriptions were maintained on the researcher's computer in password-protected programs. Member checks were done with the participants to ensure that the transcription and evaluation of the interviews were accurate. Each participant was given the opportunity to contact the researcher with any additional comments after the interview. Reviews of the transcripts were conducted to discover subthemes that were consistent with prior research on collective efficacy and trust noted in Chapter 4.

Classroom Observation Protocols

During the classroom observations, field notes were taken to record the instructional practices observed, as well as to record the questions that the teachers asked during the observations. Questions that the teachers asked were reviewed using Webb's Depth of Knowledge that the researcher had received training for use in his school that was conducted by the regional educational service center. This training was focused on improving the instructional efforts of the researcher's school and to provide a focus on the types of questioning strategies that were being used by the teachers.

The data regarding teacher instructional practices were utilized to determine if the participants' actions indicated variance from the findings by Solomon, Battistich, and Horn (1996), who found that economically disadvantaged students receive more instruction in language arts from basal readers, do less silent reading, and less creative writing. In math, these students received less instruction on analytical concepts and get less frequent use of cooperative learning in both language arts and math.

Additionally, the researcher kept a reflexive journal in which he noted anecdotal information that lay outside of the interviews and classroom observations; the findings

are presented in Chapter 5. Hays and Singh (2012) encourage the use of field notes to "create and accurate and thorough written record of field activities" (p. 228). Since the interviews and observations occurred over three visits to the school, field notes helped ensure that the researcher's impression and perceptions were recorded for use as a supplemental form of data. The researcher is a practicing school superintendent, and the reflexive journal helped him note the differences between the selected school and the reality of his personal experience to root out bias, as well.

Additional data were gathered from the School Improvement Plan that was developed by a committee called the Campus Intervention Team. The CIT is "based on the Shared Decision-Making Committee" model and is responsible for "development, implementation, and monitoring of the SIP, monitoring of student performance, and determination of student interventions and support service." The CIT comprises 10 members and includes teachers, administrators, non-instructional staff, parents, and community and business members.

Because this is a Title 1 school, this process starts with an annual comprehensive needs assessment that the federal Department of Education states is a "systematic method for determining and examining their nature and causes." Hanover Research noted in 2014 that a campus improvement plan provides a "map to the changes that a school needs to make to improve the level of student achievement, and shows how and when these changes will be made." An effective plan includes clear initiatives, responsibilities for implementation, and is consistently reviewed and updated (Desravines, Aquino, & Fenton, 2016, p. 29). The Campus Intervention Plan for the Hollie Mann school includes

three goals. The first is to improve student achievement, which is also matches the primary goal of the district improvement plan. Second, the school seeks to improve safety, public support, and confidence. The third goal is to meet the needs of special populations within the school. This final goal is where the strategies to meet the needs of the economically disadvantaged students are found.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of the interview transcripts was done using thematic conceptual matrix that portrays the data by themes (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 324). The use of the conceptual matrix allowed the researcher to identify four subthemes consistent with prior research on collective efficacy and are noted in Table 8. Prior research indicated that mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and affective state existed in schools where positive views of collective efficacy existed. The data that emerged confirmed that these four subthemes were While mastery experience and vicarious experience were judged separately in the prior research, in this study they were intertwined. This is because the district is large, but appeared to be more a function of the expectations of the administration. Social persuasion and affective state also were also related.

The subthemes of trust that emerged are presented in Table 9. As with the subthemes of collective efficacy, the subthemes emerged during data collection and during the review of the interview transcripts. Louis (2007) defined trust as “confidence in or reliance on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principle, of another person or group”. Using this definition, the participants indicated that relational

trust was evident in teacher-to-teacher interactions as well as in teacher-to-administrator interactions. As previously noted, Price (2015) found that the supportive actions of the administrators enhance the support and cohesion among staff members that in then turn form stronger trust relationships (p. 46). The responses by the participants indicated that supportive actions by the teachers and administrators had a positive effect on the perceptions of trust.

STAAR Data

Schools in Texas are required to administer the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (STAAR) assessments reading and mathematics in grades 3-10 annually. Assessments in science and social studies are only given in certain grades and therefore were not a focus of this study. Following the administration of these tests, the state then evaluates school performance based on the results. The STAAR data were analyzed by recording the results of the campus over a 5-year period that included the final 2 years in which the campus was in "Improvement Required" status. Table 8 shows the school level results of student performance on the STAAR reading assessments, while Table 9 indicates the school level results on the STAAR math assessments.

Table 8 Hollie Mann Campus Level STAAR Reading Results from 2013-2018

Year	Campus	AA	His	White	AI	Asian	PI	2+.	Sped	EcoDis	ELL
2013•	55%	63%	53%.	58%	*	76%	-	*	46%	54%	31%
2014•	56%	52%	57%	63%	*	56%	-	*	60%	55%	31%
2015	60%	64%	59%	64%	*	65%	-	*	*	60%	31%
2016	57%	65%	55%	47%	*	71%	-	*	26%	56%	29%
2017	59%	73%	57%	36%	*	70%	-	*	28%	60%	37%
2018	60%	63%	59%	*	*	71%	-	*	*	60%	54%
2019	59%.	72%	57%	48%	-	71%	-	*	34%	59%	49%

• 2013-2014 – Years in Improvement Required Status
* = not enough students taking a test to count toward accountability

Minimum Passing Standard Shown

Table 9 Hollie Mann Campus STAAR Math Results from 2013-2018

Year	Campus	AA	His.	White	AI	Asian	PI	2+	SpEd.	EcoDis	ELL
2013•	65%	63%.	64%	71%.	*	87%.	-	*	60%	64%	48%
2014•	62%	57%	61%	60%.	*	75%	-	*	58%	61%	46%
2015	91%	89%	91%	-	-	100%	-	*	-	91%	78%
2016	59%	59%	59%	31%	*	86%	-	-	27%	59%	39%
2017	60%	68%	57%	55%	*	82%	-	-	26%	60%	47%
2018	68%	73%	67%	61%	-	74%	-	*	38%	68%	61%

• 2013-2014 – Years in Improvement Required Status
* = not enough students taking a test to count toward accountability

Minimum Passing Standard Shown

A review of this data indicate that Hollie Mann students performed up to 17 percentage points below the state average on the reading assessment. However, student performance in many subpopulations have increased overall in the period from 2013 to 2018. Notably, performance of Hispanic students steadily increased during that time, when the percentage of the student population of that subpopulation increased by almost 7 percentage points. During the same period, the population of White students steadily declined and their performance declined, as well. Student performance on the math assessment seems to indicate a decline in student performance beginning in 2016. However, this data might be misleading due to the fact that the state changed the TEKS that were tested during the 2015 school year. Data from this year only include results

from the Algebra 1 exam, as all other tests were not included for accountability purposes.

When viewing the data from 2016 to 2019, the researcher found that students at the Hollie Mann school successfully recovered in math performance that occurred from the change due to state level changes. The data from the 2018-2019 school year are the only data available during the tenure of the current campus principal. It is important to note that the data show a positive increase in the math scores and a significant increase on the reading scores for the campus as a whole and most of the student sub-populations.

Additionally, the campus received a state designation due to the increase in post-secondary ready students. Should these increases continue, the Hollie Mann school will increase their overall accountability grade from a B to an A in a year. These data indicate that the teachers at the Hollie Mann are making significant contributions to the academic performance of their students.

Reliability and Trustworthiness

The researcher sought to ensure that a high level of reliability and trustworthiness was maintained in this study. In order to meet the requirements of reliability and trustworthiness, multiple data sources were used to provide additional data to inform the phenomenon that was studied (Hays & Singh 2012, Schwandt, 2007). The sources of evidence included semi-structured interviews, analysis of STAAR data, classroom observations, and the Campus Intervention Plan. Yin (2009) noted that the use of multiple sources of information allow the researcher to establish “converging lines of

inquiry" as using multiple sources of information can have similar outcomes (Yin, 2009, p. 120).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the term *trustworthiness* to establish a norm for judging the quality of a qualitative study (Schwandt, 2007, p. 299). They further outlined four criteria of trustworthiness. Credibility is the level of accuracy of the participant responses and how the researcher represents them. Transferability gives us the means of generalizing the findings to other similar situations. Dependability shows that the study was well designed, replicable and is documented. Finally, confirmability shows that the findings have direct links to the interpretations.

To increase trustworthiness, each participant was asked the same questions, allowing for the differences in position, as previously noted. Data from the interview transcripts were analyzed after the participants reviewed their responses for accuracy. Also, a peer review was conducted by another researcher who was a veteran administrator in a high-poverty, urban middle school. This peer reviewer was associated with the researcher as a member of the same cohort of scholars seeking a doctoral degree. These efforts made it possible to reduce, in as best manner as possible, bias, and thus present accurate findings that can lend to generalizations.

Member checks are a method for soliciting feedback from participants on the findings (Schwandt, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (1985) also noted the use of member checks as a means to increase the accuracy of the interview data for trustworthiness. The participants were sent transcriptions of their interview responses by email, and were asked to review the transcript for accuracy. They were also asked to make corrections as

needed, and were given the opportunity to add to their answers if they felt there was a need for clarification. Additionally, the participants were asked to share their perceptions of the process of the study, if there were problems they experienced, and how this study could have been improved (Hays & Singh, 2012, pp. 260-261).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is a practicing superintendent who works at a small, rural school in the Texas Panhandle. His experience includes working at two schools that are similar to the school that was studied. While the schools in which he worked were not urban, the problems of reaching economically disadvantaged students were similar.

Under the current system, agencies use a combination of factors to evaluate and grade schools. Among these are how all students perform on all state assessments, and how individual student groups perform on the reading and math exams. Since the percentage of economically disadvantaged students is now over 60% of the student population in Texas, most schools and districts are judged on how well their economically disadvantaged students perform on the state assessments. In fact, some smaller schools are judged by the state accountability system on how well they close the gaps with these students.

The state grades larger schools on a greater range of student categories than rural schools, and a student may count in more than one group. Economically disadvantaged students are an example of the student sub-population that is coded in this manner. Since my small school's economically disadvantaged students were the only sub-population

that was evaluated by the state accountability system due to the small size of the tested sub populations, the researcher faces many of the same issues.

As a practicing school superintendent, it was necessary for the researcher to schedule interviews at a time that was mutually acceptable to the researcher and the participants. Therefore, two additional visits to the school were made. After the second interview visit was made, an additional meeting was scheduled in order to interview one of the administrators who was unable to participate in the prior interview. This came two weeks after the second interview window.

Considerations

This analysis was limited to the published data from the Hollie Mann school from 2012 to 2018, and personal interviews of the participants conducted during the fall of the 2018-2019 school year. Data analyzed includes the interview data, student and teacher demographics, the campus improvement plan, and STAAR results. While the STAAR data is used for comparison purposes, the almost yearly changes in the differing levels of performance made by TEA make comparisons difficult.

Due to scheduling constraints, PLC meetings, as well as CIT meetings, were not attended or observed. The findings of the interviews are limited to the perceptions of collective efficacy and trust. The analysis of the perceptions of collective efficacy and trust are limited in scope and do not necessarily implicate that generalizations can be made to the general educational population.

Summary

A qualitative case study approach was used in this study to investigate teacher perceptions about their ability to improve a high-poverty, urban school. The work of the teachers and administrators removed this school from the list of IR schools and the students have continued to see growth over the last 5 years. This study sought to determine if the perceptions of the teachers and administrators of collective efficacy and trust were positive, and how the instructional actions in the classrooms help with the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students. Multiple data sources were used that included semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, state and local data related to the STAAR tests, the campus improvement plan, and anecdotal data from the observations of the researcher. The data analysis indicated subthemes that were consistent with prior research on collective efficacy and trust. Chapter 4 will present the findings of this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions teacher and administrators have about improving a high-poverty, urban school. The researcher postulated that staff members who were successful in improving a high-poverty, urban school would have positive perceptions of collective efficacy and trust.

This chapter presents an overview of the results with subthemes of collective efficacy and trust that emerged from the interviews, along with anecdotal comments made by the researcher. A discussion of the analysis of teacher perceptions of collective efficacy and trust will also be presented.

Prior research has indicated that collective efficacy is positively related to student academic performance in reading and math (Bandura, Goddard, Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk-Hoy, et al.). Researchers have also shown that perceived collective efficacy was most strongly associated with teachers' sense of personal efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004, p. 9). The first section of this chapter will present the findings associated with the subthemes of collective efficacy that emerged from the interviews of the participants.

While collective efficacy has been found to have a positive effect on student academic performance in reading and math, it is not the singular factor for success. Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky (2009) noted that in schools with a high level of trust, teachers felt greater responsibility and were more likely to invest themselves in the operations of

the school (p. 298). This study sought to identify if the levels of positive trust that existed at the school were associated with improvement in academic performance. The second section of the chapter will present the findings associated with the trust factors that emerged from the interviews with the participants.

Collective Efficacy Factors

Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy (2000) found a positive relationship between collective efficacy and student achievement in math and reading. State and federal accountability systems rely heavily on the results of standardized assessments in these two disciplines; therefore, research at a school that had removed itself from Improvement Required Status and has a student population of greater than 80% economically disadvantaged, while improving the academic performance of those students, was selected for this study. Bandura (1993) found that efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave (p. 118). Prior research by Bandura, Goddard, et al. have indicated four subthemes indicative of collective efficacy, and are presented in Table 10. Emerging subthemes of collective efficacy that emerged that will frame this section.

Table 10 Collective Efficacy Sub Themes

Sub Theme Definitions – from Goddard and Bandura

Mastery Experience	Prior collective successes can raise their capabilities to achieve similar successes in the future
Vicarious Experience	Teacher efficacy is enhanced by observing successful models with similar characteristics
Social Persuasion	Encouragement or specific performance feedback from a supervisor or a colleague
Affective State	Belief they can exercise control over threats do not conjure up disturbing thought patterns

Mastery Experience

The first subtheme of collective efficacy that emerged from the analysis of the interview data was that of mastery experience, meaning that the staff's prior collective successes can raise their capabilities to achieve similar successes in the future (Goddard, Skrla, & Salloum, 2017. p. 223). On the surface, mastery experience appears to indicate that only gaining experience at the school leads to internalizing the experiences that lead to the positive gains in student performance. Many high-poverty, urban schools, however, face a high rate of turnover that does not allow for long-term experience to take hold and thereby build the levels of mastery from staff that most would consider typical (Ingersol, 2001).

In the current study, the mastery experience was passed on by two means. First, the veteran teachers passed on their experiences to new hires via a robust mentoring program. Second is an expectation of instructional practices by the administrative team and supported through professional development. This two-pronged effort to improve instructional practices appeared to have the effect of improving not only the newly hired staff members, but veteran teachers, as well.

Mentoring programs vary from school to school, from very basic programs that familiarize new hires to the norms of the campus to advanced efforts to provide the opportunities to learn from master teachers on the campus or in the district. Many schools provide a mentor for new hires as a resource for learning the daily operations that are necessary to function successfully. However, these programs are lacking in building the kind of instructional efficacy necessary to successfully reach students in high-poverty, urban schools. Additionally, some schools provide new hires professional development training to add to their instructional techniques while the veteran teachers often are not given the same opportunities because of cost or the belief from the administration that their skills have been developed to the level expected. The effectiveness of both of these efforts to build a mastery experience is mostly up to the new hire to adapt to their new setting. Building the mastery experience of existing staff members is not always a focus of the administration, and thus improvement, if it occurs, does so at the level of the individual teacher. Some veteran teachers could balk at the idea of attending professional development to improve their instructional practices,

believing that their practices are sufficient. In fact, however, all teachers should desire to improve their efforts to reach all of the student in their charge.

While most schools provide some sort of mentoring program for new hires, Hollie Mann provides more than a person to answer questions. The mentoring program at Hollie Mann allows for frequent input by both the mentor and the mentee regarding successful instructional practices, as well as giving mentees help with students who struggle in non-academic ways. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to observe instruction in each other's classrooms to gain understanding into effective techniques being utilized. This program allows the mentor to share experiences during weekly meetings that are encouraged by the administrative team. The administrative team encourages the sharing of ideas through the facilitation of the professional learning community meetings that happen weekly. The mentors and mentees have a continuing relationship beyond the first year of the mentoring program that continues the positive instructional changes that often occur during the first critical year.

Aminah, the high school math teacher, stated that she gets to share with her m entee by encouraging her to take risks in instruction:

> Don't worry if you make a mistake; you learning [sic}. It is a learning process. I don't expect you to [sic]. Like, if I tell you to do A, B, C, and D. Try to do A whenever you feel comfortable with that; now let's go to B. It's a step by step by step. and you [sic] going to fail, and you going back to try and do better. And at one point, you are going to do it on your own, and you are not going to need me anymore.

This is one example of how veteran teachers at Hollie Mann passed on their mastery experiences. Aminah was well aware practices that were successful with her

students, and was open to sharing those with her mentee. By not hoarding information that could have a positive impact on another teacher, the veteran teachers at Hollie Mann ensure that all students are receiving impactful instruction.

The mentoring program also demonstrates that the administrative staff sees the value in strong relational bond between teachers. Through a mentoring program that encourages open communication and frequent feedback, the veteran staff at Hollie Mann is able to increase the effectiveness of new staff members. Observations by the mentees allow them to see how to implement instructional practices that have been effective for the mentor, thus enhancing their own instructional efforts. Hollie Mann encourages teachers to learn from each other, not just to rely on outside, professional development, thereby increasing the mastery experience of the whole staff. In many schools, the mentoring program appears to dwindle past the first weeks of school as teacher settle into the normal routines of the school year. The Hollie Mann school shows that mastery experience is passed down through meaningful discussions and observations of effective teaching practices from the experienced staff members that occur throughout the initial year of employment into the subsequent years thereby creating a cycle of continuous improvement that has been impactful on the academic progress of the students.

By continuing this relationship beyond the first year of the new teachers' experience, Hollie Mann staff members also ensure that support for improving instruction is ongoing. Since teaching in a school with diverse students means that all staff members need to work together in order to maintain a high level of commitment to

practices that lead to increased student performance, continuing to support new teachers past the first year is an important means of helping students succeed.

Carrie, the high school ELA teacher, expressed how she still meets with her mentee from the previous year:

> I just think everybody knows that we are all on the same page and we are trying to work through things together … this is only her second or third year, and so I was her mentor last year. Um, and you know, she still comes to me every and day at lunch and we can bounce ideas off one another, and 'How should I handle this situation,' and 'What should I do with this.' Know that you have somebody there to talk through things.

Aminah, Carrie, and the other mentors make sure that they meet weekly with their mentee teachers. These frequent interactions ensure that the newly hired staff members are supported and are able to share concerns, successes, and are provided the tools and support necessary to improve the quality of instruction that students receive. The mentor-mentee program at Hallie Mann is not a simple program directed at just giving new hires the basic information needed, but a more robust attempt to provide meaningful instructional support by veteran teachers. It is an in-depth effort to provide the opportunities for successful teachers to model school's instructional norms and support their mentee on an ongoing basis.

The second area where mastery experience is passed on to the teachers at Hollie Mann is the professional development conducted by the administrative team. The concept of creating a base of instructional techniques for the staff has provided the administrative staff the opportunity to ensure that all teachers are similarly trained on instructional techniques. Therefore, as a way to establish mastery experiences, the school

purchased textbooks that can help build a common set of instructional skills . The school made an investment in the staff with the instructional skills presented in *Teach Like a Champion*.

The training that Fabian, the eighth-grade dean, leads means that all of the staff members have a background in the techniques that are expected to be used in the classrooms Hollie Mann. This adds to the mastery experience of the teachers by providing them with the common practices that can be modeled during the mentoring interactions and can be seen in administrative observations as well. The mentors observe and provide feedback to the new teachers in these techniques, thereby increasing their effectiveness.

When asked about the process of implementing the instructional structures found in *Teach Like a Champion* Fabian stated:

> Three years ago, everybody, I made everybody to do that. And then when they come, we train them. With the book, . . . we train them.

The researcher confirmed in his observations that the teachers used innovative strategies to reach their students, including active journalling in all classes, active participation through frequent movement, differentiating instruction based on the curent competency levels of the students, and asking higher-level questions to a greater variety of students. Additionally, instructional techniques and questioning strategies were at more than just the lowest level of expectation noted by Solomon, Battistich, and Horn (1996).

In Kiera's sixth-grade ELA classroom, for example, the teacher used frequent motion to engage kinesthetic learners, and these practices allowed student to share their learning with their peers. Similarly, Ayla used interactive journaling in her eighth-grade math class, which encouraged a cross-curricular reinforcement of writing that assisted all of her students. In the high school, both Carrie and Aminah used techniques that had the students using analysis of the lesson objectives to reinforce their learning. Each teacher also used modeling techniques to assist their students. These practices confirm Bandura's (1989) concept that "modeling influences also convey rules for generative and innovative behavior" (p.363). By not simply relying on the instructional practices that led to the school being in IR status, the staff at Hollie Mann have worked to become flexible in their instructional approaches and are thus able to improve learning engagements and outcomes.

By implementing a vibrant mentoring program, providing the staff opportunites to observe other teachers, and providing focused instructional technique training, Hollie Mann has been able to harness the mastery experience of the staff in a way that helps increase the academic performance of the students on state assessments.

Vicarious Experience

While mastery experience can be a powerful tool in reaching a greater number of students, that concept alone is not the only factor. A second subtheme is vicarious experience, or the idea that teacher efficacy is enhanced by observing successful models with similar characteristics (Goddard, 2001, p. 469). Goddard, Skrla & Salloum found that efficacy beliefs could be raised by observing others that are successful in the face of

familiar opportunities (p. 231). Many schools will send teachers who need assistance in the classroom to observe effective teachers in neighboring districts or to campuses in their own district. These efforts, however, present logistical challenges such as arranging the visitation and employing a substitute teacher. Staff members at Hollie Mann do not travel to other schools with similar demographics; instead they are given opportunities to learn from their colleagues.

The most influential means that the staff at Hallie Mann has for vicarious experience is their utilization of the Professional Learning Community process. The staff engages in a supportive PLC structure that encourages feedback and a common set of goals for instruction and behavior development.

While vicarious experience from prior research focuses on observing what others are doing outside of the school setting, the PLC structures at Hollie Mann allow the teachers to openly discuss what is working and what is not working in the classroom. Teachers, however, also focus on individual students during these meetings. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas about how they are able to reach students having academic, behavioral, or social difficulties. This encourages the sharing of concerns and solutions that are non-judgmental, since the students are taught by multiple staff members. Through this means of vicarious experience, the staff is better able to meet the needs of the students before their academic performance falls to a level where they are not able to recover. The concept of working together toward a shared commitment for individual students at Hollie Mann was expressed by Kiera, the middle school ELA teacher:

> Amongst ourselves, just say, sixth grade. We find out what teachers the particular student or students have, then we try to come up with a plan. So, like our sixth-grade team, this year we are all together. So, most of our talking comes during PLC or lunch. Then you know, we are trying to figure out like, "How is Johnny in your class?" Then we are talking, then we are communicating to where we want to make sure we find a solution to whatever problem we are having with that student or students. And, so, we do a lot of collaborating. Then if we have to team up on parent conferences, we do that.

Working together to adjust what occurs in the classroom allows the teachers to meet the ongoing needs of their students, as does meeting at least once a week to discuss what the data from curriculum-based assessments and observations indicate. These conversations are held during PLC meetings, lunch, and common planning times to allow the staff to utilize vicarious experiences in a way to make changes that are positive for their students.

These conversations indicate that the shared approach that has been developed to reach students is important. Teachers' concerted efforts to find solutions indicate willingness to adjust to meet students' needs. Furthermore, these actions confirm what Goddard, et al. (2015) found in their research on teacher collaboration and efficacy: that teacher collaboration is a key form of enactive experience in schools (p. 503).

It is important to note that vicarious experience and mastery experience appear to be related. The mentoring program allows veteran teachers to give input based on their personal experiences. Mentors are encouraged to make classroom visits that differ from more formal appraisals done by administrators because they allow for more collegial conversations focused on better instruction. Additionally, the mentees also make classroom visits to observe their mentor's instructional practices. The PLC structure allows teachers by grade grouping or by academic discipline to go further than the

mentoring process to address improvement in academic and non-academic areas. By coupling the mentor program and the strong PLC structure together, mastery experiences and vicarious experiences work together to create a better instructional program for the students at Hollie Mann.

Social Persuasion

At Hollie Mann, the frequent interactions between staff members and with the administrators enable the opportunities for social persuasion to appear as the third subtheme of collective efficacy. Goddard, Hoy & Hoy (2004) state that, "social persuasion may entail encouragement or specific performance feedback from a supervisor or a colleague or it may involve discussion in the teachers' lounge, community, or media about the ability of teachers to influence students." Bandura (1986) indicates that the "potency of persuasion depends on the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of the persuader."

Positive feedback from the principal happens with a Monday Focus sent out in an email each week to the staff and by other means as well. Although many administrators frequently use some sort of weekly newsletter for purposes of communication, either through paper or email, the Monday Focus at Hollie Mann goes further than simply listing the week's events. The principal makes sure to share the positive impact that teachers are having on students. Her efforts for teachers and those of the junior administrators have helped to build an atmosphere of encouragement to try new instructional techniques and to reach the students on a more personal basis. Each of the participants shared about the Monday Focus in the interviews. Their responses show that

being recognized publicly is important means of producing the sustained efforts on behalf of the students. The administrative team's efforts to provide positive support indicate that the use of social persuasion is present at Hollie Mann.

Aminah, the high school math mentor, responded in the following way to a question about the new principal, confirming the importance of positive recognition by the administrative staff:

> I am recognized because I do my good job. I mean, everyone wants to be recognized somehow. But if I see that, there has to be something in me, that I want the same thing. So, hopefully, that works and the students are going to notice that if you do the right thing, you going to get, um, you going to be recognized and we are going to notice it and we want you to notice it.

The lead principal, however, is not the only administrator who uses encouragement as a means of communicating expectations. When asked about how he communicates with the staff, Lucas, an assistant principal, stated:

> So, I think the interaction, we are trying now to be more recognizing of, of teaching ability and recognizing of unusual things that are happening good.

Focusing on giving praise when he notices instructional improvement, or assistance with students outside of the classroom, is an indicator that social persuasion exists between the staff members and administration and has a growth mindset to find solutions to problems that all teachers face. The positive feedback from Lucas and the other assistant principals helps build the type of social persuasion that develops positive beliefs in the teachers' abilities.

The staff at Hollie Mann works together to create and share a common approach to reaching the students, and they work to recognize each other for the work that is being

done to help all students in the school. Each of the previous themes of collective efficacy are important to developing the positive perceptions of collective efficacy. Taken alone, they would be powerful forces in influencing the staff's collective efficacy. The final subtheme found in the interviews—affective state—ties together the ideas of collective efficacy.

Affective State

At Hollie Mann, emotional connections between teachers and administrators appeared to be especially strong. Bandura (1993) posits that "people that believe they can exercise control over threats do not conjure up disturbing thought patterns" (p. 132). Goddard, et al., note that "affective states may influence how organizations interpret and react to the myriad of challenges they face" (p. 6). These interpretations show that how people react on an emotional level to the task at hand has an impact on their perceptions of efficacy. The challenges of teaching in a high-poverty, urban school like Hollie Mann are difficult. But the participants in this study reacted positively when responding to questions related to interactions with other staff members and especially when they were talking about their students and parents. Building a positive affective state in staff members ensures that Hollie Mann develops a successful teaching staff who will continue to positively impact the lives of their students.

Keira concluded her comments about teaching at Hollie Mann with the following statement:

> You know, I think I have found happiness. You know, because I had never returned to a school. You know, consecutively, I have been at a different school every single year, you know, so that says a lot about this school. Because I have been at schools with the same

> demographics, you know, they were Title 1 schools and everything, it just says something about the, the community, the family part. That is probably what I was missing at those other schools—that family aspect. And here, I have no problem with signing my contract to come back. It been a really great experience for me.

Responding in such a powerfully emotionally way, Kiera shows that working at Hollie Mann has become more than just a job—that she is emotionally connected to her work and because of this, is more likely to have staying power when difficulties come her way. She has found a place that allows her to thrive as a teacher and make emotional with connections to her students and other staff.

Each of the teachers expressed similar emotional connections, indicating that their affective state was very high. When they are faced with challenges, their positive affective state allows them to persevere and stay focused on reaching students.

A positive affective state is also experienced by the administrative participants. Lucas had experience as a teacher at Hollie Mann before he made the transition into the administrative role. He made the most impactful comment when asked if he would think of leaving Hollie Mann was:

> This is a job where I know that I have literally saved students' lives. I can't think of a more satisfying place to work.

These examples make clear that the subtheme of affective state is strong at Hollie Mann.

Collective efficacy conclusions

All four subthemes found in prior research by Goddard and others appeared in the responses of the participants in this study. While mastery experience is the most

powerful source of efficacy information (Goddard, Hoy, & Wolfolk-Hoy, 2004; p. 5), it was not singularly important here. The work done at Hollie Mann also indicated that vicarious experience is important. Social persuasion in the form of the "shout outs" in the principal's Monday Focus helped to increase teacher's beliefs about their ability to succeed. Efforts by Lucas and the other administrative team members to find positives to start meetings with demonstrated the administrative team is committed to t relationship building that Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller (2015) found to improve student achievement (p. 503). Each showed an emotional connection to their tasks and to the school during the study. In fact, none said they wanted to leave, when asked. Their emotional commitment to their students and colleagues was evident in the interactions that the researcher observed.

Trust

While the four themes of collective efficacy were evident, this study also sought to discover the perceptions of trust in the school as well. Tschannen-Moran (1998) states that trust is vital in schools (p. 336). Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky found that teachers in schools with a high level of trust are more likely to be invested in the school's operations (p. 298).

One of the purposes of this study was to investigate perceptions of trust among teachers and administrators in a successful high-poverty, urban school in Texas. The staff members at Hollie Mann have shown a commitment to reaching students through their efforts to improve instructional programs. This section discusses how their perceptions of trust impact the relationships between teachers and between teachers and

administrators. Table 7 shows the subthemes of trust that emerged from the responses of the participants.

Table 11 Trust Subthemes

Theme	Definition
Relational Trust	Result of repeated interactions with others in modern organizations; Louis (2007).
Supportive Actions	Actions that allow the teachers to focus on the task at hand; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (1998).

Relational Trust

In order for staff to effectively reach students, a certain level of trust must exist to allow them effectively to reach the shared goals listed in the Campus Improvement Plan. Bryck & Schnieder (2002) note that people depend on each other to reach their desired outcomes and are empowered by their efforts regardless of their formal power position (p.41). These ideas indicate that trust is developed by the interactions of each group or individual on the campus. This study found that there was a level of trust that existed from the relationships that teachers had with each other that formed a foundation to reach the students at the school.

Kiera noted a relational bond between the teachers in her responses to several questions. When asked about the level of trust between the teachers she stated,

> We have a lot of teachers that are, bonded and then we have some that are reserved and you don't really know what is going on. But I don't think that is a bad thing though.

She added to this idea of building relationships with her peers when asked about what the best aspects of teaching at Hollie Mann:

> The relationships that I have built. And those relationships are like the best thing I can hold onto. . . They are a family of teachers. And so, they were very supportive and then working with them, they did not, um, excuse me. They did not you know just throw me to the side. They, we were all pretty much worked together. If it was a discipline problem, we came together as a team to you know. Hey, we need to call the parents, we need to do this, we need to do that. It was just very team oriented.

Kiera's responses confirmed the ideas posited in prior research. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) said it in this way: "trust was an expectancy belief held by an individual that the behavior of another person or group would be altruistic and personally beneficial (p. 336). By welcoming Kiera into the teaching team at Hollie Mann, and working together for the benefit of students, they built trust in that make it possible for the team to endure the difficulties that exist and persevere to help their students achieve. She focused on the idea that the staff had become like a family to her and this indicates that the level of trust on the relational level had risen to where she felt that she can be vulnerable with them when a problem arose. The teachers shared their concerns with each other without fear of negative consequence.

The recurring subtheme of relationship building in the responses indicate that the staff is willing to put their own self-interests aside to reach the goals set by the group. The responses indicated that the relationships that are being built allow the teachers to

share concerns with their colleagues without fear of negative consequence. Developing these positive relationships with colleagues helped staff build the trust necessary for maintaining the high levels of effort that it takes to teach a diverse set of students. The participants at Hollie Mann have shown that they are willing to do whatever is necessary to meet the educational needs of their students.

The mentoring program allows the teachers to build trust relationships through the open sharing of practices and input that makes all teachers more effective. If the level of trust remains high, then the teachers can reach out to each other and can be assured that they are supported and not judged. Supporting each other in a very nonjudgmental way helps build trust among teachers and helps students benefit from teachers who are more committed to their well-being, both academically and personally.

Trust factors also have a connection with collective efficacy. Tschannen-Moran (2004) posits that as collective efficacy grows, the motivation to invest energy and ideas in the efforts builds momentum to make the school more productive. At Hollie Mann, the school makes an effort to connect with the larger community. This creates a trusting environment for community stakeholders who had previously been neglected.

To help build trust with the community, the new principal brought in teams of teachers for a scavenger hunt in the area that Hollie Mann serves. This activity helped to build trust between the teachers since the mentees accompanied their mentors. Having new staff members participate allowed them to experience trust building in a concrete manner. Additionally, the community saw that the school was now trying to engage them as partners in the education of the children who live in the area.

Aminah added her perceptions of this initiative and the impact it had on completing the planning for the annual Fall Festival, an event intended to engage the community, held at Hollie Mann:

> And there are places that we did not know that existed around here. So, I think that, that is good. And, in fact, on Wednesday I have a meeting with a person from an organization they want, they are going to do a fall festival, and we are planning as a high school to do a fall festival. So, I was telling her, I mean, my kids can help you, and then you can help us. We can start building, you know, bridges. And the students are going to know that you exist and you are gonna know how it is to work with us. I think, that, that is very positive.

The staff at Hollie Mann works together to develop a shared vison for excellence that the school has been able to build over the last several years. If these efforts were isolated, they might not improve student performance. But combined, they form an effective means of reaching not only students, but the community, as well. Building relational trust from teacher to teacher and by extension from the school to the community reinforces Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's ideas that trust is necessary for effective cooperation and communication, which is a foundation for organizations to have cohesive and productive relationships (2000).

Supportive Actions

While relational trust with teachers is important, how the administration works to build trust is equally important. At a larger school with multiple administrators, one can surmise that trust must exist with not only the lead principal, but with the assistant principals, as well. Bryck and Schneider (2003) state that if the school's basic day-to-day operations are managed by the administrative team, then an overall ethos that helps build trust will emerge (p. 43). While it was not specifically stated in the responses, none of

the participants noted any problems because of a lack of effort on the part of the administrative team regarding daily operations.

In fact, Aminah said that communication had improved under the new principal: "having that communication helps us know what she wants, how she wants it." The increase in communication from the principal was shown previously in her Monday Focus sent out to the school each week, which was linked to the collective efficacy subtheme of social persuasion.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) found that trust allows individuals to focus "on the task at hand," which in the case of a school, is student academic achievement. The observations and conversations with teachers in this study indicated that they were not concerned that the administration was operating in a untrustworthy manner. The emerging theme of supportive actions on the part of the administrative team was confirmed by the prior research. Price (2015) found that administrators who were supportive enhanced the collegial support and cohesion among the staff (p. 46). He concluded that these supportive actions then provide feedback to form even stronger trust relationships. Staff responses indicated that the administrative team at Hollie Mann provided the supportive actions that Price posited as important.

Ayla, the middle school math teacher, was very direct when asked about how she perceived the change in administration:

> Um, it's refreshing to know that you know, with the leadership that we just acquired what we received so far is supportive and um, we even see it come through our students. Um, I think it is very important for our administration, they also develop the relationships with the students, because and, and they are visible in the hallway they are visible in the cafeteria, transitions.

Seemingly simple actions like being more visible during the passing periods and interacting in a more positive manner increased teachers' perceptions of trust with the administration. During the school visits, the researcher observed many of the actions that Ayla mentioned. Each administrator was visible and active during the passing periods. Each was observed having at least one positive interaction with a student during the passing periods.

Additionally, Fabian was observed actively serving as a temporary substitute in a classroom where the teacher had a medical emergency until the permanent substitute could arrive. Instead of just directing someone else to cover the class, he took the initiative. This was not lost on the staff. The teachers near that classroom immediately began to work to provide Fabian the support he would need until the substitute arrived.

Carrie noted the impact of the supportive actions in this way:

> Like, they (the District) wanted the STAAR Test to be online. This was all the sudden, I think this was two years ago. They wanted a school to pilot it. Ms. Smith came and said, 'Let's talk to the teachers and see what the teachers think.' And so, I said the parents can't be here to advocate for our kids, but it's not in the kids' best interests because we haven't done any practice rounds with that. We need to implement that at the beginning of the year so we can start teaching them those annotation strategies and the typing strategies to utilize that, and then she took that and listens to that. And they go back to their bosses and say the teachers don't think it is in the best interests of the school. So, that just listening and all of us on the same team and we are all on the child's team because maybe there is nobody at home in that child's corner. I think that's what admin offers here that really helps us like support the kids and that our voices are heard.

Ms. Smith took these actions while dean of the high school, but the teachers noted that her actions had not changed after being promoted to lead principal. Her

supportive action on the behalf of the teachers helped her to build trust that she still had students' best interests in mind. Carrie noted this in her response about the other efforts Ms. Smith organized after she became the lead principal:

> I mean, I think they just allow opportunities. If you find something that you want to do, Ms. Smith is all for it. Or she wants to know more about it. She is always for trying new things. Like the restorative circles we have this year. She found out about that and she, you know, wanted to try it. Because discipline has been an issue, more predominantly in our middle school. And it was like the things that we're doing, these strategies, you know, we tried CHAMPS, we tried all the things. They weren't effective, so, what can we do that will be effective. So, she tried that. Um, and I think she just listens.

Supportive actions by the lead principal had formed a more cohesive staff in just the few months since her appointment to the position. Interactions that were made during the site visits indicated that the level of trust in the administrative staff was increased by the actions of the administration. These interactions were collegial and indicated that the principal listened intently when she was approached by staff members, and she showed that she was open to hearing about any ideas that could benefit the students. By doing this, she established trust with the teachers and demonstrated her willingness to listen and take the actions that necessary for positive student change.

The supportive actions by the administrative team allows teachers to focus on the task of teaching. The administrative team at Hollie Mann has created the trusting environment needed to achieve the CIP's first goal of improved student achievement.

Trust Conclusions

The work done at Hollie Mann focused on improving students' academic performance and futures prospects. Teachers had a positive view of trust with their

colleagues. The actions of the administrators in support of teachers created a positive level of trust between the teachers and administrators.

Classroom Observations

Research has indicated that students who are economically disadvantaged receive instruction that is at a level that does not serve their instructional needs (e.g., Auwarter & Aruguette, 2008; Solomon, Battistich, & Horn,1996). This study included a single, 45-minute classroom observation to determine if the instructional techniques employed by the participants varied from findings noted in prior research. Protocols used during these observations included a listing of the various instructional techniques that were observed, as well as recording the questions asked by the teacher. The questions were evaluated using Webb's Depth of Knowledge, in which the researcher had been trained, and which he utilized during instructional rounds at the school where he held an administrative role.

Instructional Techniques

Data from the classroom observations at Hollie Mann school, however, revealed that the instructional practices were more creative, active, and focused on cross-disciplinary actions, as well. In the middle school classrooms, for example, Ayla and Kiera utilized seven different strategies during the observation. Both used interactive notebooks as a tool and also ensured that students had the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the learning objective on the interactive whiteboard.

These actions show a divergence from the prior research that found only low-level instruction. The high school teachers also utilized higher level learning approaches

in their classrooms as well. Aminah's observation occurred in her combined AP calculus class. While the students already worked at a high level, Aminah encouraged the AB students to work problems that were at the higher BC level. Carrie worked with her tenth-grade ELA class on using symbolism using various higher-level methods. She modeled what she expected from a student assignment, leaving the students with a better idea of the expected outcome. The instructional techniques used in the classroom at Hollie Mann support findings about organizational intentionality by Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2000).

Teacher Questioning

Auwarter and Aruguette (2008) found that teachers frequently judge economically disadvantaged students as less than capable. When coupled with lowered teaching techniques employed by teachers in the study by Solomon, Battistich, and Horn (1996), we could expect that the level questions asked by teacher in a high-poverty, urban school would also be at a lower level.

During the classroom observations, the researcher used the protocol of recording each question the teacher asked. Utilizing Webb's Depth of Knowledge, which is based on the assumption that curricular elements may all be categorized by cognitive demands required to produce an acceptable response (Webb , 1997), the researcher quantified each question. He had previously received training on this before he implemented it during instructional rounds at the school where he worked. Each of the teachers asked questions that were related to classroom procedures, but the over 60% were asked at DOK level 2 and 3. These questions related to cognitive skills and concepts and short-

term, strategic thinking (Webb). The teachers at Hollie Mann used questioning techniques that suggest that their efforts to improve student outcomes are above those found in prior research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings and how they applied to the research questions posed, followed by a discussion with a brief analysis of the supporting data found. Finally, suggestions for how to improve the collective efficacy and trust in schools and implications for further research will be presented.

Summary

The intent of this study was to use qualitative case study methods to investigate teachers' and administrators' perceptions of collective efficacy and trust in a high-poverty, urban school that has been successful in reaching students who are economically disadvantaged.

Collective efficacy was found to have a positive impact on student academic achievement in studies conducted by Goddard and others. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) cited Cunningham and Gresso (1993), who called trust "the foundation of school effectiveness" (p. 341). A school that is successful in reaching students who are economically disadvantaged was found to be an important focus of research since the data show that economically disadvantaged students perform at a lower level on state assessments, as noted in Table 1(TEA, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

Purpose

The intent of this study was to use qualitative case study methods to investigate teachers' and administrators' perceptions of collective efficacy and trust in a high-

poverty, urban school that has been successful in reaching students who are economically disadvantaged. In this case, the school was defined as one that had exited from Improvement Required status under the Texas Accountability System and continued to close the gaps for underserved students. In order to place this study within the context being studied, the Campus Improvement Plan and analysis of STAAR data were reviewed to better understand the school. Six members of the staff were interviewed to learn their perceptions of collective efficacy and trust within the school. Four of the participants were teachers, two from the English language arts and two from the math department. Additionally, two members of the administrative team were interviewed. The lead principal declined to participate as she was in her first year in that position.

Theoretical Framework

Collective efficacy has been the focus of scholars such as Goddard, Hoy, LoGerfo, Wolfolk-Hoy, Skrla, and others, who have shown that CE is positively associated with the differences in student achievement that can occur between schools (Goddard, Hoy, and Wolfolk-Hoy, 2000). Megan Tchannen-Moran (2004) has written that teachers' strong sense of efficacy exerts significant influence on student achievement by promoting teacher behaviors that enhance learning (p. 145).

Four subthemes of collective efficacy were revealed in the participant responses: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and affective state. Using these as a frame, this study determined that the perceptions of collective efficacy held by

teachers and administrators successful in working with economically disadvantaged students at the Hollie Mann school were positive.

Trust was the second frame used for this study. Dewitt (2019) noted, "it requires a great deal of trust, which must be built over time, and an intentional effort by educators to buck the status quo" (pp. 31-32). Subthemes emerged from the participant responses that are consistent with research showing that schools have better results when the leaders provide the opportunities for "sustained and supported instructional discussions" as well as investigating "the relationships between instructional practices and student work" (Brinson and Steiner, 2007).

The subthemes of trust found at the Hollie Mann school are relational trust and the supportive actions of the administration. Louis (2007) posited that relational trust exists as "the inevitable result of repeated interactions with others" (p.3). Price (2015) notes that by providing support administrators can enhance the support and cohesion among staff members that in then turn provides feedback forming stronger trusting relationships (p. 46). The teachers' and administrators' responses indicated that increased levels of trust existed because of these subthemes.

Discussion

The discussion of findings will be organized into three sections. Section one is a discussion of the findings on the perceptions of collective efficacy. The second will cover the perceptions of trust in the school. The final will be an analysis of the school's performance data as found in the reports published by TEA.

Collective Efficacy

Dewitt (2019) noted that the reason collective efficacy has become an important area of focus for school leaders is that it has a marked positive impact on student learning (p. 34). Goddard et al have conducted studies that show collective efficacy has a positive impact on student performance in reading and math. For a school to achieve other than normal results with student groups that frequently underperform on state assessments, there must be clear commitment in their collective efficacy beliefs. Four subthemes of collective efficacy emerged from the responses of the participants; mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and affective state. At the Hollie Mann school, teachers' and administrator responses indicated positive perceptions in all four subthemes of efficacy information.

While no one list of mastery experiences was found during this study, it was clear that the instructional efforts at Hollie Mann were stablished to improve performance on state assessments. A robust mentoring program allowed experienced teachers to share effective teaching strategies with mentees and that this sharing of helped develop the mastery experience found in the prior research. Using a common set of expectations for instructional practices in books such as *Teach Like a Champion* indicates a set of norms for differentiated methods to reach the maximum number of students on the campus. Furthermore, there were no instances of, "We have always done things this way." Teachers are encouraged to seek answers to instructional methods that are not necessarily within the norms of most schools.

In the math classrooms, instructional practices engaged more of the students in learning by ensuring that the students understood the purpose for the learning objectives. In the ELA classrooms, a varied approach to the lessons was observed as well. Integrating technology where it was appropriate and making sure that the students were actively writing were important in both classrooms. Instead of an approach that follows a formula of presenting state test-based items, the teachers worked to link the student learning to their lives.

The use of vicarious experiences was most notably seen in the PLC structures of the school. Bandura (1986) noted that people learn about their own abilities by observing actions that attain results in similar circumstances. At Hollie Mann, the campus improvement plan clearly designates that a PLC common planning time for grade level teachers would be made available through the master schedule for "lesson planning, data analysis, and sharing instructional strategies."

By setting aside this time, school leadership makes it possible for the instructional staff to share their best practices and work together to provide an instructional program that meets the needs of the students. Ware and Kitsantas (2007) note that these types of practices make teachers "more likely to plan appropriate activities" (p. 303).

In addition to shared planning, the campus improvement plan makes accommodations for a PLC structure that makes it possible for the administrative team to attend most if not all of the meetings. The responses of the administrative participants indicate that they do attend the PLC meetings, but they are not the leaders of those

meetings. They are there as observers, who assist the teachers when asked, confirming research done by Raudenbush, Rowan, and Cheong (1992). These researchers posited that teachers who had more control over the instructional conditions had a greater sense of efficacy. Furthermore, the work done by the SDMC at Hollie Mann confirms Bandura's (1997) findings that empowering group members helps develop positive collective efficacy (p. 474).

Mastery experience and vicarious experience appeared to go hand in hand at the Hollie Mann school with a robust mentoring program, active PLCs, and an engaged administrative team that supported their efforts. Teachers felt free to share with their colleagues and thus were able to continue down a path that assisted more students.

While mastery experience and vicarious experience are important subthemes of collective efficacy, they are not the only ways in which efficacy appears. The use of social persuasion was also found at Hollie Mann. In this case, it appeared in the form of positive feedback from the administration and peers. The most notable way in which social persuasion was found was the frequent citing of the Monday Focus sent out by the lead principal. In this communication, she always gave what the participants called "shout outs." These public praises of practices and actions done in and out of the classroom made it clear to the teachers that their efforts on behalf of the students were being noticed. While there was no monetary or other tangible reward, the perception of the teachers was that it had a positive impact on how they approached their daily actions. Klassen (2010) said that good communication among a staff and a strong sense of collegiality reduced stress and increased commitment and job satisfaction (pp. 348-349).

Interactions between the teachers were positive and when they gathered in a group, the discussions never devolved into what people would call a "gripe session." Instead, if there was a problem, they worked actively to find a solution.

This was most evidenced in an interaction between a mentor and mentee. The mentee had a concern which was addressed in a non-confrontational way. Additionally, the mentor spoke calmly and made sure the mentee felt supported. At the conclusion, positive feedback was given and an assurance that the mentor was available for additional support. This support indicated a level of communication and support from colleague to colleague that provided the positive social persuasion noted in the research.

The final subtheme of collective efficacy was that of the affective state. The emotional responses that support or undermine an organizations' ability to tolerate pressure in the face of crises (Goddard & Skrla, 2006) works with the concept of social persuasion as well. It is this powerful connection to peoples' emotional states that appeared especially strong. The important work of reaching a group of students who are marginalized by many in the policy making establishment is vital to developing the efficacy to serve all students. Being emotionally invested in the students, made it possible for the staff to persevere in a stressful environment. Each of the participants indicated an increased emotional connection with the students, peers, administration, and community. While there was not a singular note of how the emotional connection led to a change in instructional practice, each of the teachers showed a deep desire to help their students.

Several of the participants frequently called students "my kids" and were encouraged by returning students who came back to thank them for helping them in the past. Working in a school that had removed the specter of state sanctions, to a school that now achieves performance distinctions from the state accountability system clearly was a source of pride for all of the participants.

Each of the subthemes of collective efficacy were present in this study. While none were more singularly important that another, all needed to be in place to indicate that the teachers and administrators had a positive perception of their collective efficacy at the Hollie Mann school.

Next, we will turn to a discussion of the findings on trust.

Trust

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) said that "trust allows individuals to focus on the task at hand, and therefore, to work and learn more effectively" (p. 341). This study sought to gain insight into the perceptions of trust at a school that is successful in teaching economically disadvantaged students. There were two areas in which trust was most evident in this study. First was the relational trust that had been developed from teacher to teacher and from teacher to administrator. Second were the supportive actions done by the administration that led to improved instructional practices and increased student performance. This section will be divided into those two parts related to trust factors found at the Hollie Mann school.

Relational Trust

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) found that collegial and engaged behaviors help create trust (p. 341). Furthermore, Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky (2009) state that trust is potent and within informal social structures it serves to mitigate risk, enhance efficiency, and support learning in schools (p. 295). At Hollie Mann school, the levels of trust from teacher to teacher were found to be important for meeting the expectations set forth in the campus improvement plan established by the CIT. The participants responses indicated that the relationships they had developed with their colleagues were an important factor in staying at the school. The level of trust allowed them to engage in meaningful discussions during the weekly PLC meetings. Research by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy states that trust means that the behaviors of individuals allows others to see those behaviors as "altruistic and personally beneficial" (1998, p. 336). If the behaviors of their peers allowed them to be open about the difficulties that each face on a day to day basis, then trust is developed in a way that provides for meaningful feedback. This feedback then allows the free flow of ideas and can mean that the instructional design improves for students.

The robust mentoring program at Hollie Mann is important to the concept of teacher to teacher trust as well. The Campus Improvement Plan specifically calls for such a program to be ongoing, even after the induction period is over. In fact, it was seen in the responses that these relationships remained intact after the first year of the new teacher being on the campus. Allowing the teachers to meet and discuss how best to serve students means the school is able to make changes to the instructional program and ongoing construct, instead of trying to keep doing many of the same things over and

over without noticeable or measurable results. The level of teacher to teacher trust was seen to be high at Hollie Mann school.

Supportive Actions

Peterson and Smith (2011) noted that if schools are to be more effective, then trust has to play an important part in the relationship between the teachers and the campus principal (p. 14). This idea will also extend to the administrative team in a larger campus that has multiple assistant principals. Since each of the administrative participants had supporting duties they were responsible for, the trust in these individuals should exist as well. Price (2015) stated that principals "directly influence informal school processes, such as teacher attitudes and behaviors, while indirectly influence student outcomes and engagement" (p. 45).

The participants affirmed that the level of trust between the teachers and administrators was positive due to the supportive actions of the administrators. The supportive actions, such as the "shout outs" in the Monday Focus, allowing the teachers to take the lead in PLC meetings, providing a supportive environment for classroom discipline, and making themselves visible throughout the day the administrative team works to build a trust foundation. This foundation of trust means that the teachers feel empowered to use innovative teaching strategies to meet the needs of their students. The teachers saw these supportive actions to be a powerful indicator that the administration stands behind them in their efforts.

Another way that the administrators built trust with the teachers was the initiative by the new principal to engage with the community around Hollie Mann. The responses

indicated that the teachers were encouraged that they now had an avenue to reach out to the community to assist their children. Using simple actions that show support for the instructional efforts of the teaching staff, the administrative team at Hollie Mann have created elevated perceptions of trust. The teachers and administrators indicated that the setting of shared goals was important to the school and they were committed to a course of action to implement them with consistency. The school's campus improvement plan has consistently had a goal of increasing student performance in reading and math by 10% for the past 3 years. The actions noted in the classroom observations indicate that the teachers are committed to reaching the goals set by the SBDMC by using more than just basic levels of instructional practice.

These efforts to use varying instructional practices to reach their students indicates that this staff repudiates what research done by Auwarter and Aruguette (2008), who found that teachers frequently judge economically disadvantaged students as less than capable. While the campus improvement plan indicates a need for increased academic performance for all student groups, it also has a singular goal for the students in special populations which includes economically disadvantaged students. While the stated measurable objective for special populations sets a goal of meeting the needs 100% of the time is lofty, it appears that the combined effort to raise performance of all groups by 10% is also impacted by this goal as well. The participants responses indicated that their instructional efforts are aimed at all students, not just a selected group. It is this attitude of the teachers that reinforced the findings of Bandura who

stated, “staffs who firmly believe that, by their determined efforts, students are motivatable and teachable whatever their background” (p. 143).

Considerations

This study was limited to the analysis of the published data from the Hollie Mann school from 2012 to 2018 and personal interviews of the participants conducted during the fall of the 2018-2019 school year. Data analyzed were the interview data, student and teacher demographics, the campus improvement plan, and STAAR results. While the STAAR data are used for comparison purposes, the almost yearly changes in the differing levels of performance made by TEA make comparisons difficult.

Due to scheduling constraints, PLC meetings as well as CIT meetings were not attended or observed. The findings of the interviews are limited to the perceptions of collective efficacy and trust. The analysis of the perceptions of collective efficacy and trust are limited in scope and do not necessarily implicate that generalizations can be made to the general educational population.

Conclusion

Collective efficacy has been found to be significantly and positively related to differences in student achievement at public schools (Goddard, 2001). This study sought to gain insight into the perceptions of collective efficacy from teachers who serve at a school with at least 80% of the student population who are economically disadvantaged. Data from TEA shows that students who are economically disadvantaged do not perform as well as their more affluent peers (TEA, 2012-2018).

The teachers at Hollie Mann had positive perceptions of the four subthemes of collective efficacy. It is important for school leaders to gain a greater understanding of this construct in order to increase the efficacy at schools across the state. Regardless of student demographics, the pressures placed on them mean that leaders need to find a way to positively impact the greatest number of students as possible. DeWitt (2019) says that collective efficacy doesn't just happen (p. 31), instead leaders must be intentional in their efforts to build a greater sense of collective efficacy on their campuses.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) state that "trust is a vital one in the study of schools (p. 336), then practitioners must find ways to increase trust in schools across the state as well. In the face of continual attacks by educational reformers who seek to further privatize education, school leaders must also make concerted efforts to find ways to increase the levels of trust not only within the school, but the communities as well. DeWitt also states that "it takes a great deal of trust, which must be built over time, and an intentional effort by educators to buck the status quo" (pp. 31-32). Proactive efforts to take the steps to increase trust are important.

Implications for Practice

School leaders in schools of all sizes should communicate to the teachers, students, and community the need to increase the trust and efficacy of all stakeholders. In order to increase the efficacy of the teachers individually and collectively, school leaders should look more toward capacity-building practices and less at trying to find quick fixes through the multitude of programs available in the public market. While a quick fix may

keep a school out of IR status in the short term, building the efficacy of the teachers will have a lasting impact on the learning outcomes for students who are most in need.

Policy makers who seek to make lasting changes to schools should pay attention to these two constructs as well. Instead of increasing the non-instructional requirements that may not benefit the educational outcomes of our most vulnerable students, they should instead seek to provide funding and support for practices that have been found to be the most effective. Their efforts need to provide teachers and administrators with the support they need to raise the efficacy and trust in their schools. Increased focus on efficacy and trust-building should be the focus of policy makers and practitioners alike.

Building trust in schools is also important to aid teachers in reaching marginalized students. Simple, supportive actions by administrators could have an impact. Additionally, administrators need to make every effort to share some of the load of creating the instructional program for the students. The efforts made by the administration at Hollie Mann show that purposeful work to include and praise the teachers helps to create an environment of trust that leads to increased student performance.

Suggestions for Further Study

To better understand the role of collective efficacy and trust in urban schools that serve economically disadvantaged students, longitudinal studies at successful schools could be conducted. Also, extending this research to a rural setting has the potential to have a greater impact on the profession as well as this study was conducted in an urban school. Since many Texas schools are set in rural settings with limited resources,

studying how collective efficacy and trust impact those schools would add to the body of literature, as well.

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APPENDIX A

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS

Participant: _____ Subject:_____

Instructional Practices Observed:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Teacher Questions Asked and Depth of Knowledge Associated with the Questions:

1.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

2.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

3.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

4.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

5.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

6.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

7.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

8.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

9.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

10.

Depth of Knowledge: _____

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Greetings,

As a teacher of math or language arts you are invited to participate in a study titled: Teacher perception of their ability to improve a high-poverty, urban school.

The purpose of this study is to hear the voice of teachers in a successful Texas school that serves a population that is at least 80% economically disadvantaged. This study is seeking two teachers of math and two teachers of language arts to participate in this qualitative case study research.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be given the opportunity to gain insight into the role that collective efficacy and trust has on your campus. Participants will have two semi-structured interview of 45 minutes each. After the first interview, the researcher will conduct one classroom observation where only instructional practice and teacher questions will be utilized. Participants may gain further knowledge of the instructional practices and types of questions that lead to the success of this school. The total time commitment expected for this study is approximately three hours. Interviews will be conducted during your preparation period or after school, with your consent. This study will be conducted on campus.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:

Doug Rice, Doctoral Candidate Texas A&M University

drice0780@tamu.edu (806)382-4405

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study